



***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond  
September 16-20, 2013***

## **Osoyoos Indian Band wins bid for first provincial jail on reserve land: Chief wants more jobs training for Aboriginal inmates**

[MacLean's](#)

September 16, 2013 9:49am

Ken MacQueen



In 2007, Chief Clarence Louie, the no-nonsense leader of British Columbia's [Osoyoos Indian Band](#), was appointed to a five-person federal panel reviewing the operations of the Correctional Service of Canada. There was much that troubled him, as he toured federal penitentiaries. He was distressed, but hardly surprised, by the overrepresentation of First Nations and other Aboriginal offenders in prison. Most anyone from a First Nations community has a friend or relative who has done jail time, he said in an interview. But what frustrated him, in that context, was the mushy morass of well-meaning "Aboriginal" programs to heal and empower, or to find one's inner warrior.

"That's what pissed me off, when I saw the programming they were doing: sweat house, sweat house, sweat house, all that healing and cultural stuff," he says.

"There's nothing wrong with spirituality to a degree, but they were doing too much of it and not enough employment and training, like welders or carpenters or electricians. I want to see First Nations programs based around jobs."

The study was noted and filed in the grand tradition of task force reports. But Louie has taken his case for reform a giant step further. He and the 500-member band have gone into the prison business. The band beat out several contenders to win provincial approval to locate a new 378-cell Okanagan Correctional Centre on its reserve lands. The \$200-million project will generate some 500 direct and 500 indirect jobs, once construction begins next year. The high-security prison, expected to open in 2016, will employ 240 staff and create many more spinoff jobs.

Louie believes it's the first provincial prison on reserve lands. While the band won't operate the facility, it will reap significant revenue from the initial 60-year lease, and the grants in lieu of taxes. It also intends to be an active landlord, meeting soon with the three potential contractors to discuss band-employment prospects, and with the province to offer ideas for more practical employment-based Aboriginal programs.

At first glance, the optics of a band bidding for a prison seem akin to a deal with the devil. Some 27 per cent of adults in provincial and territorial custody are First Nations, Metis or Inuit people, though they represent just four per cent of the national population. In federal prisons, where inmates serve sentences of two years or longer, 23 per cent are Aboriginal—a number that increased by 56 per cent in the last decade and represents an incarceration rate 10 times that of non-Aboriginal people, says a recent report by the federal Office of the Correctional Investigator.

The prospect of a reserve-based prison didn't sit well with some band members, Louie admits. "But the majority of our people voted 'yes' for the usual reasons, no different than off-reserve: jobs and money." He says the positives outweigh the negatives. "You can look at the stats. Yeah, there's overrepresentation in prisons. There always has been and always will be, probably. Is *not* having a prison on the reserve going to change that? To me, it won't make it worse. If anything, it might help it," he says. "How do we help the Aboriginal offender if we have the not-in-my-backyard attitude?"

The Osoyoos band, located in the semi-desert of the South Okanagan, has its hand in a host of projects, from housing and resort development to commercial, industrial and agricultural leases, as well as its own vineyards and award-winning [Nk'Mip winery](#). B.C. Premier Christy Clark said one reason the bid was successful was the band's distinction as owning the most businesses per capita of any First Nation in Canada. It helped, too, that the neighbouring communities of Osoyoos and Oliver are enthusiastic proponents.

Louie wants the fenced, 10.5-hectare site to include horse stables, giving prisoners, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, a chance to bond with animals. "We're a horse-based culture," he says. There will, of course, be a sweat lodge and cultural programming, but he hopes the prison will have a strong focus on trades training. "Obviously, the [incarceration] numbers prove their high-priced psychologists and sociologists, all of this New Age bulls--t, isn't working for First Nations people." He was disgusted, when touring an Edmonton prison, to see Aboriginal people working at crafts. "I don't know anybody that can make a living, pay a mortgage or keep their kids in hockey by making drums and teepees."

At the very least, there will be well-paying jobs for prison staff, many of them Aboriginal people, he hopes. As for the inmates, he doesn't expect change overnight. "I hope our people don't wind up in this prison," he says, "but I'm realistic enough to know that some of our people will."

## **Hit-and-miss nature of pre-sentencing reports for aboriginal offenders a national disgrace**

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 16, 2013

Ian Mulgrew

Fourteen years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada urged judges and prosecutors to listen more closely to aboriginal offenders and pay better attention to their unique circumstances at bail hearings and in sentencing.

It hasn't worked.

First Nations remain vastly overrepresented in prisons and whether "the system" hears his or her individual story remains hit and miss.

A new study by the B.C. Legal Services Society emphasizes aboriginal people continue being ill-served by the publicly paid stakeholders and, as a result, they spend longer in jail and taxpayers get bigger bills.

Aboriginal people number only four per cent of the population, but they account for roughly 25 per cent of the imprisoned.

For women, the number is even more disturbing - 32 per cent.

The research found that First Nations offenders who received a special pre-sentencing report prepared by a society-trained writer (most of whom are

aboriginal) had fewer jail sentences than comparable offenders without the support of such a report.

When jail was imposed, those with these so-called Gladue reports were incarcerated an average of 18 days compared to 45 days for those who did not have the benefit of such support.

These reports are named after the 1999 Supreme Court decision that called on the judges and prosecutors to recognize the life experience of First Nations offenders was often hugely different from that of other Canadians and to address the systemic discrimination they faced.

The court-mandated reports are supposed to canvas the cultural background of a native offender detailing the effects of racism, residential school abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, colonialism, any of the endemic issues that can shackle aboriginal people - and offer reasonable alternatives to imprisonment. Since the Supreme Court ruling, however, judges across the country complain they have not received proper reports from probation officers, who normally compile pre-sentencing reports, and there is no agreement about who should provide or pay for these specialized documents that require 20 to 30 hours to prepare.

In 2011, because a significant proportion of legal aid clients are aboriginal and the use of the reports seemed inconsistent, the legal services society undertook a pilot project (funded largely by the Law Foundation of B.C.) to train writers.

The society's evaluation consisted of a comparison between 42 cases in which a Gladue was used and 42 similar cases without a Gladue.

The research also showed that 76 per cent of offenders being sentenced for a repeat offence received a shorter sentence with a Gladue report.

This analysis was combined with interviews with defence lawyers, prosecutors, provincial court judges, report writers and aboriginal offenders.

The study confirmed what everyone has been saying since the last century - this approach benefits all of us by reducing the number of aboriginal offenders in prison and jail. It's better for them and cheaper for the government.

In addition, aboriginal offenders who met with Legal Services Society-trained Gladue report writers said they experienced a higher level of trust than they did when meeting with a probation officer.

That's an important goal, too, given the alienation aboriginal people feel toward the legal system.

But here's the rub - although the evaluation demonstrates the value of the pilot project, the society is in a cash crunch and does not have the funding to continue. As a result, Gladue reports will continue to be produced in very limited circumstances. It's appalling.

A decade-and-a-half after the country's highest bench identified a heartbreaking problem, Ottawa and Victoria are still dithering about who should pick up the tab - the federal government because it is responsible for First Nations or the provinces who are responsible for the administration of justice? While they squabble, a tragedy continues.

Let's face it, if judges are unaware of the special circumstances of aboriginal offenders, they cannot determine workable bail conditions or impose an appropriate sentence.

The system remains stacked against First Nations and it is the stakeholders' pervasive culture of delay that perpetuates this injustice.

(The society's evaluation report is available on its website: [legalaids.bc.ca/assets/aboutUs/reports/aboriginalServices/gladueReportDisbursementEvaluationJune2013.pdf](http://legalaids.bc.ca/assets/aboutUs/reports/aboriginalServices/gladueReportDisbursementEvaluationJune2013.pdf).) [imulgrew@vancouver.sun.com](mailto:imulgrew@vancouver.sun.com)

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## Truth and Reconciliation Events around Vancouver

### [The Ubyyssey](#)

September 15, 2013

Sheliza Halani



*The First Nations Longhouse at UBC will host events during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Photo Carter Brundage / The Ubyyssey*

The City of Vancouver has named the week of Sept. 16 to 22 Reconciliation Week, in honour of the aboriginal families that were impacted by the residential school system.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

is a court-ordered commission created by the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement when former residential school students took the Canadian government and churches that ran the schools to court. It was the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history.

The TRC aims to give survivors a chance to share their experiences with the Canadian public.

UBC is suspending classes on Sept. 18, the day the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Vancouver events begin, so that students will be able to attend.

On the morning of Sept. 18th, there will be a lighting of the sacred fire and sunrise ceremony at the Sacred Fire Site on the PNE grounds. At 11 a.m., there will a youth panel at the Vancouver Pacific Coliseum who will share their stories of damage from the system, the post-traumatic stress encountered and the difficulties they faced when re-integrating into their communities.

At 1 p.m. at the Coliseum, a commissioner sharing panel will hear testimony from survivors of the residential schools. At 3 p.m., there will be speeches from several individuals, including UBC president Stephen Toope, followed by a closing session. Each day has a different theme; Thursday will be an education day and Friday will include women's perspectives.

Other events to be held throughout the week include a theatre session at UBC's First Nations Longhouse, an art exhibit at UBC's Belkin Gallery and a photography exhibit at the Museum of Anthropology. There will be a canoe brigade in Vanier Park on Sept. 17 and a reconciliation walk on Sept. 22, at which upwards of 35,000 participants are expected.

"UBC has a significant aboriginal population but also has a significant relationship to aboriginal people and their territories," said Justice Murray Sinclair, a Truth and Reconciliation commissioner. "[Students should] recognize that the issue of reconciliation is not an aboriginal issue, it is a Canadian issue as well."

Linc Kesler, a senior adviser to the UBC President on Aboriginal Affairs, said UBC is working on getting funding to open up a permanent center for the study of residential schools.

"Many people experienced really difficult circumstances in those schools ... but for most of their lives, never talked about [it] ... and when they tried to talk about it, people weren't receptive," Kesler said.

Kesler said that survivors are indicating how important it is that people are willing to listen to them. "This understanding in a broader, cultural sense is actually possible," he said.



## Harper government woos B.C. native leaders: Critics suggest blitz by top officials to drum up support for pipelines is designed to avert lawsuits

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 14, 2013

Peter O'Neil



*Prime Minister Stephen Harper speaks at a barbecue at Quail's Gate Okanagan Estate Winery in West Kelowna on Friday. He has sent several cabinet ministers and top public servants to consult with B.C. native leaders to garner support for oil pipeline proposals. **Photograph by:** Jonathan Hayward, The Canadian Press, Vancouver Sun*

The Harper government is launching a blitz to convince B.C. native leaders to support oilsands pipelines to the West Coast.

Those leaders said they will listen, but one said it appears to be a last-minute effort by the Harper government to fend off possible native lawsuits rather than the start of real consultation.

The steady stream of cabinet ministers and a team of top public servants from seven ministries - unprecedented, according to one native leader - will be in B.C. in the next few weeks, the apparent result of a consultant's warning that First Nations are determined to oppose the Northern Gateway and Kinder Morgan pipeline proposals.

That consultant, Vancouver lawyer Doug Eyford, was appointed by Harper in March.

"He's been out here, on the ground, finding out what the mood is," said Gordon Christie, director of the University of B.C.'s Indigenous Legal Studies Program. "I can't imagine anything other than him going back and saying anything other than, 'things are not looking good.' " Ottawa won't release Eyford's report. But a letter from a top federal official to B.C. native leaders earlier this week hinted Ottawa has to do a better selling job.

Eyford's meetings with those who could be affected by the pipelines "have highlighted the importance of engagement between senior government officials and First Nations, covering all aspects of the government's plan for responsible resource development," wrote Serge Dupont, deputy minister at Natural Resources Canada.

Vancouver Island NDP MP Jean Crowder said Harper is scrambling to win hearts and minds in anticipation of the federal Joint Review Panel (JRP) decision on Enbridge's proposed Northern Gateway pipeline to Kitimat, due in December.

"He's only got two years left in his mandate. If he doesn't get cracking it isn't going to happen before the next election," she said.

"The (Eyford) report's come to him and it says, 'you guys have blown it, you haven't built the relationship with First Nations.' Harper looks at the calendar and says, 'oops, I've only got two years left, and these things don't move quickly,' so now he's flooding the region" with top officials.

But she said the response doesn't come close to meeting the Supreme Court of Canada's requirement to consult, accommodate and even compensate First Nations for projects that infringe on aboriginal title to land and resources.

Grand Chief Ed John of the B.C. First Nations Summit said he welcomes a push by Ottawa to consult more broadly on oilsands pipelines.

But he said the officials shouldn't just stay in Vancouver, and should travel to areas like the north coast where there are concerns about possible tanker spills.

He also complained that Harper, who is in Vancouver Monday on an unrelated matter, has never met with West Coast leaders on B.C. turf since being elected in 2006.



"That's a fundamental reality of this government and this prime minister, they are aloof to the needs and interests of First Nations in British Columbia."

He said Harper needs to become engaged if he hopes to push the multibillion-dollar natural resource projects.

"The governments of Canada and British Columbia need approval of First Nations for their development proposals in this province. There's absolutely no way around this," he said.

Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, president of the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, said he believes the Conservatives are anticipating a rejection of Northern Gateway by the JRP.

If that happens "we believe the Harper government would simply declare (Northern Gateway to be) in the national interest and overturn the Joint Review Panel recommendation," Phillip said.

"At which time there would be a flurry of lawsuits ... and the Harper government would rely on the consultation record as part of their legal defence - that's possibly what's happening here."

But Grand Chief Doug Kelly of the Sto:lo Tribal Council said he doubts Ottawa is sending heavy hitters in hopes of proving to judges that Ottawa fulfilled its requirement to consult and accommodate. He noted that Dupont specifically states in his letter that the meetings aren't intended to meet the Crown's duty to consult.

Kelly said his people are anxious to get out of poverty and want to listen to economic development proposals, but added that some projects - he wouldn't identify them - should be rejected from the outset due to the potential environmental damage.

UBC's Christie said Ottawa appears to be recognizing that it must do more to win support from First Nations than relying on the JRP process to assess aboriginal concerns.

"The feds seem to have thought they could rely on the JRP to satisfy, substantially, their duties to consult," Christie told The Vancouver Sun. "But now they see the resistance still there, and if anything as strong as ever, and are concerned that regardless of the extent to which they may have met their duties through the JRP process, this is headed to a major showdown in the courts, should they press ahead."

"A last-minute push to try to win people over seems to be their response, after months of inactivity."

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## Ojibway language tutor? There's an app for that

[CBC News](#)

Sep 16, 2013 6:38 AM



*Darrick Baxter's free app for smartphones and tablets, which teaches people how to pronounce the Ojibway language, has been a huge success.*

An app for smartphones and tablets is breathing new life into aboriginal languages.

"It helps them ...how to say the words through the audio," said Darrick Baxter, president, Ogiki Learning Systems, which is based in Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, located 165 kilometres northwest of Winnipeg.

He created the app so his daughter could learn Ojibway. It worked so well he put it up on iTunes for free so others could do the same.

That was about a year and a half ago. Since then, it has been downloaded more than 20,000 times.

Baxter's company now gets calls and emails from around the world from aboriginal communities wanting to use the app for their languages. Baxter said he plans to release a Cree version soon.

University of Winnipeg professor Lorena Fontaine said Baxter's app is just one example of how people are trying to bring back the languages of their ancestors.

But she says the federal government needs to step up as well.

"There needs to be constitutional recognition that aboriginal language rights exist and that there's guaranteed funding by the federal government to help revitalize aboriginal languages," she said.

## **Alberta Aboriginal events get money from province: Three grants totalling \$80,000 were announced Sunday**

[CBC News](#)

Sep 15, 2013 2:09 PM

Three Aboriginal events in Alberta received new funding from the provincial government Sunday.

The grants, totalling \$80,000, were announced at the Sharing Our Culture pow pow in Calgary's Heritage Park. The money is part of the Alberta government's efforts to increase tourism by investing in festivals and events with potential for tourism growth.

"Aboriginal people are an integral part of the province's history, society and culture," said Robin Campbell, Alberta's minister of Aboriginal relations. "Funding these events is another way to offer Albertans the opportunity to become more aware of and enjoy Alberta's Aboriginal heritage and people."

The three recipients of the grants are:

- Sharing Our Culture Pow Wow, Sept. 15, in Calgary
- International Peace Pow Wow, Feb. 1 to 2, 2014, in Lethbridge
- The Making Treaty Seven event, Sept. 2014, in Calgary

Tourism is a \$7.8 billion industry in Alberta, employing 139,000 people and attracting more than 35 million visitors each year.

## **Cold Lake First Nations raising alarm over more leaks on CNRL oilsands lease**

[Edmonton Journal](#)

September 16, 2013 12:01 PM

Sheila Pratt

EDMONTON - Cold Lake First Nations is raising concerns about two new leaks on a CNRL oilsands lease on the air weapons range east of Edmonton where bitumen has been leaking for more than six months on four sites.

The two sites, that reportedly leaked process or contaminated water, were not posted publicly and the band wants to know why.

The Alberta Energy Regulator told the Journal it did not give public notice because the amounts of process water coming to the surface were "minor" and not related to the four sites leaking bitumen from deep below the surface on the company's Primrose lease.

The two leaks of water, not bitumen, occurred in June, said Cara Tobin, AER spokesman.

But Cecil Janvier, Cold Lake band councillor, says that explanation is not good enough.

"It's still a contaminant that is coming up, and that's the bottom line," said Janvier.

As with the bitumen seepage, 'it's not known what is causing this process water to surface and that's the issue,' he said.

Janvier said this leak of process water raises questions about whether the underground aquifer is safe from contamination.

***More to come ...***

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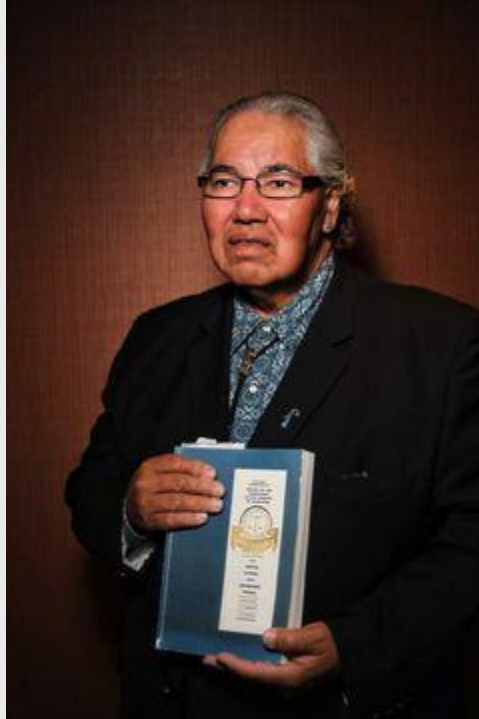
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**25 years after the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry began, much of its promise has yet to be realized**

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

September 14, 2013

Mary Agnes Welch



*Justice Murray Sinclair (MIKE DEAL / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS) Photo Store*

"The concepts of adversarialism, accusation, confrontation, guilt, argument, criticism and retribution are alien to the Aboriginal value system, although perhaps not totally unknown to Aboriginal peoples. In the context of Aboriginal value systems, adversarialism and confrontation are antagonistic to the high value placed on harmony and the peaceful coexistence of all living beings, both human and non-human, with one another and with nature. Criticism of others is at odds with the principles of non-interference and individual autonomy and freedom. The idea that guilt and innocence can be decided on the basis of argument is incompatible with a firmly rooted belief in honesty and integrity that does not permit lying. Retribution as an end in itself, and as an aim of society, becomes a meaningless notion in a value system which requires the reconciliation of an offender with the community and restitution for victims."

-- Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba: The Justice System and Aboriginal People.

#### THE BIG IDEA -- AN ABORIGINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

There are nearly 300 recommendations in the main AJI report, covering everything from bail hearings to outstanding land claims to how fast an officer's revolver ought to be bagged as evidence after a police shooting.

Some of the recommendations, the easy ones, have been fulfilled. The Indian Act has been amended to allow many First Nations to regain their status lost through arcane "marrying-out" rules. The Portage women's jail was closed, finally, last year. Child welfare has been devolved to aboriginal-run agencies. Civilian-lead police

commissions and a special investigation unit are almost set up, 25 years after J.J. Harper was shot by police and the AJI criticized lax police oversight.

But some of the AJI's other recommendations were radical and sweeping, and the passage of time has made them no less controversial. That includes dozens of recommendations related to the creation of a separate aboriginal justice system infused with traditional cultural principals of indigenous justice. Aboriginal leaders called for such a system on the first day of the AJI hearings as a key element of self-government, and many aboriginal legal experts have since laid out why it's needed and how it could work. But progress has been almost non-existent. Here's a primer:

#### WHAT THE AJI RECOMMENDED:

A uniquely aboriginal system under the umbrella of the Canadian constitution, including police services, a prosecutions branch, legal aid, courts, probation services and a community-based correctional system.

Aboriginal communities should be entitled to enact their own civil and criminal codes, or to adopt federal and provincial laws. Where possible, laws, processes and punishments should be culturally-appropriate.

On Aboriginal land, aboriginal laws apply even to non-aboriginal people.

Tribal courts, like the ones in the United States, could be a first step.

In the meantime, the number of aboriginal people employed as probation officers, Crown attorneys, correctional staff, legal aid lawyers and other justice officials must be increased to represent, at least, the proportion of aboriginal people in the community. That will involve dramatically more recruitment of aboriginal police officers, law students, court staff and others.

#### WHAT'S HAPPENED SINCE

In the early 1990s, the Filmon government began to explore the idea of an aboriginal court system, but it fizzled.

More recently, the northern chiefs have begun to explore the idea of an aboriginal community court, though many are skeptical that the political will to create such a court -- common in other provinces -- is lacking.

The provincial government has shown little interest in an aboriginal court like the one in Toronto, let alone a wholesale justice system based on indigenous control. Aboriginal Affairs Minister Eric Robinson said the idea is not on the radar, in part because the province prefers to focus on improving the aboriginal child welfare system.

Justice Murray Sinclair acknowledges there have been few structural changes in the direction of an aboriginal-run legal system, though he says the new generation of leaders are starting to put some meat on the bone of the idea. He said the idea amounts to a profound shift in our concept of justice. "It could take generations before it's done effectively," he said.



## RELATED ITEMS

### 1. ARTICLES

#### • **Then and now -- what's changed in 25 years**

"[T]he relationship between Aboriginal people and the rest of society must be transformed fundamentally. This transformation must be based on justice in its broadest sense. It must recognize that social and economic inequity is unacceptable and that only through a full recognition of Aboriginal rights -- including the right to self-government -- can the symptomatic problems of over-incarceration and disaffection be redressed."

*-- Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba: The Justice System and Aboriginal People.*

The first day of the inquiry began with a peace pipe and ended with table-thumping. Ron Richard, then the young, idealistic spokesman for the Manitoba Metis Federation, used his turn at the podium to lambast judges biased against Native people, courts located far from reserves, a system based on white values at odds with aboriginal culture, and police officers whose innate bigotry prompted them to mistake the executive director of the Island Lake Tribal Council for a young car thief.

On the second day of hearings, things got even more heated. A Winnipeg man told the inquiry that aboriginal people ought to quit complaining and get jobs.

"You don't want to pay your own way," said Fred Debreceen, to boos and heckles. "You want forever to put your hands in the white man's pockets -- not one of you wants to work."

Yesterday marked 25 years since the start of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, which laid bare, over a painful year, the relentless failure of Manitoba's legal system to treat aboriginal people fairly.

The AJI was sparked by two deaths -- one fresh and shocking, and one shrouded in years of silence and collusion. In March of 1988, J.J. Harper, the director of the Island Lake Tribal Council, was shot by a Winnipeg police officer on Logan Avenue following a scuffle. Harper's death became emblematic of Winnipeg's racial divide.

Just three months earlier, the courts finally convicted one of four men responsible for the beating death of teenager Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas. The conviction offered little comfort to Osborne's family, who waited 16 years for justice. Osborne herself became emblematic of Manitoba's epidemic of missing and murdered aboriginal women.

The AJI dissected those two cases, and much more. Over the course of a year spent visiting towns, cities, reserves and even jails all over the province, the AJI's commissioners gathered evidence of a justice system that had "failed Manitoba's aboriginal people on a massive scale."

In their final report, judges Murray Sinclair and Alvin Hamilton crafted nearly 300 recommendations covering not only the machinery of justice but also treaty relations, child welfare and resource rights. At its core, the AJI made the case for a uniquely aboriginal justice system as a key element of self-government and reconciliation.

The AJI report was supposed to be a turning point.

There is no question it raised awareness among Manitobans about aboriginal inequality and the legacy of government policies that profoundly wounded First Nations families, communities and culture.

The AJI also offered Metis and First Nations people a rare chance to speak candidly about their experiences dealing with cops, courts and corrections. The collective weight of their stories made it clear Manitoba had a problem.

But, 25 years after the process began, there is evidence the promise of the AJI has yet to be realized.

Much of the AJI's 25-year-old descriptions of the justice system and aboriginal polices sound remarkably current, as though they come straight from last year's Idle No More movement.

Though Helen Betty Osborne's death and the silence that stymied the police investigation galvanized debate about violence against aboriginal women, since the AJI began there have been no fewer than 40 aboriginal women who have gone missing without a trace or whose murders remain unsolved. Calls for a national inquiry are only slowly gaining steam.

Meanwhile, the province is in the midst of two more headline-grabbing inquiries -- one into the emergency room death of Brian Sinclair, the other into the failure of the child welfare system to protect toddler Phoenix Sinclair. Both have, again, exposed the marginalization of many First Nations people, the failure of institutions to help and the subtle undercurrent of racism.

But, perhaps the most startling failure of the AJI is aboriginal incarceration rates. When the hearings began in Winnipeg Sept. 14, 1988, roughly half of all inmates in the province were aboriginal.

Today, the figure stands at 70 per cent.

In preparation for an interview with the Winnipeg Free Press, veteran lawyer Harvey Pollock, who represented the Harper family during the inquiry and has spent much of his career tackling aboriginal legal issues, jotted down a few notes on the AJI's legacy. At the end of his scribbles, in capital letters, he wrote, "Nothing has changed."

Justice Murray Sinclair, who was a young aboriginal provincial court judge when he was asked to be the AJI's co-commissioner, takes a longer view. He said the AJI spawned key changes in the justice system, including the Gladue principle that directs judges to take into account an Aboriginal offender's background during sentencing. And, child welfare has been devolved to aboriginal-run agencies, a significant step toward self-government that is bolstered by a new generation of well-educated aboriginal professionals.

Sinclair says it will take generations to undo the damage done by more than 100 years of destructive government policies such as residential schools, and, though the AJI report demanded swift action, Sinclair now doesn't expect to see tangible progress on some of the more sweeping recommendations in his lifetime. For Ron Richard, the young, table-thumping Metis man who spoke during the first day of the AJI hearings, that reality is a tough sell.

"If I was to do it today, I would probably be banging on the table again because I'm not really sure that much has changed," said Richard, who now works for Manitoba Hydro and has followed justice issues keenly since the AJI. "Twenty-five-years later, the system still isn't working, not to our benefit anyway."

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"They did a great job with the Helen Betty Osborne case. It got down to the root of the problem. With J.J. Harper -- they exposed the police department for what it was, and the commission found an element of racism. They showed that it was a cover up. They showed that there were lies. It cost the chief of police his position. He had to resign. I think the report dealt very adequately with both those cases. When it came to other aspects of the inquiry, as is the case with many of these government-appointed commissions, the reports are tabled and generally not acted on. There are some parts of the AJI report upon which there's been some movement. For example, on the criminal justice side, there's Gladue. That's a product, I think, of that commission, and it is some benefit. There is circle sentencing - not being used to a great extent, but it's there and it's available for certain offenses. There's still a disproportionate number of aboriginal people in prisons. To what extent has the AJI really affected the lives of aboriginal people? On a broad level, very few recommendations have really been implemented. I don't know that aboriginal lives, particularly in the north, have changed as a result."

-- Harvey Pollock, lawyer for J.J. Harper's family during the inquiry.

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"Since 1991, we've heard a lot more -- aggressive's not the right word -- more vocal outspokenness from aboriginal leadership about the state of affairs. There have also been significant legislative changes, significant legal decisions... The population of aboriginal people has changed significantly. The population of Canada has changed significantly. In addition to that, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples was held. Oka occurred. A lot of things have occurred since the AJI report that have sparked significant movement within society. The real question is, have incarceration rates changed and have child welfare rates changed? Yes, they have. But, they've

gone up. And there's reasons for that, too. Part of that is the birth rate for aboriginal people is about four to six times that of the non-aboriginal population. It's a much younger population than the Canadian population overall. In all societies, the group that is most active in terms of activity that leads to criminal offences is the under-35 population. That population is much higher in the aboriginal community. The same factors that spoke to over-incarceration in 1991 when we did our analysis -- the systemic discrimination, the lack of employment, the lack of social programs that address crime and misbehaviour, the poor educational attainment, higher suicide rates -- are still present. But I think we're also now beginning to see and understand the intergenerational implications of residential schools.

-- *Justice Murray Sinclair, AJI commissioner, now chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission charged with uncovering the history and effects of Indian residential schools.*

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One of the recommendations in the AJI was in relation to increasing recruiting and employment of Aboriginal people in the justice system, with a focus on lawyers. There are a handful of lawyers practicing criminal law who have Aboriginal backgrounds but there could be more. When you are starting out as a newly called lawyer it is very, very difficult even if you are with a firm. With respect to my experiences in the justice system, I can say that it has been fairly positive. Again, it is through my own lens and I do not doubt my clients or their family members have had negative and soul-destroying experiences as accused, witness or even victims. I can say that I have never been treated in a racist or a discriminatory manner by other lawyers, court staff or judges. If I have ever been yelled at or treated poorly it was because I was a junior and did something stupid, not because I am Aboriginal or a woman. Is the system any fairer or effective? No. We are trying, but we do not necessarily have the tools to do it. The justice system is the last resort, the absolute last kick at the can. In terms of my youth clients, the systems that are supposed to take care and support them are failing -- their family unit, community, CFS and education systems. I find that the focus then turns to the justice system to clean it up.

-- *Stacey Soldier, an indigenous criminal lawyer with Bueti Wasyliv Wiebe.*

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When the AJI came about 25 years ago, there was a sense of optimism in the aboriginal community, where there was a hope that positive change would come. When the AJI was announced, Manitoba was seen as the leader of progressive thinking when addressing aboriginal over-representation in the justice system. Now a mere 25 years later and having the highest per capita population of Aboriginal people in the country, we are behind the rest of the country in incorporating and valuing Aboriginal perspectives. While there have been strides of progress, there is much work left to do at incorporating the AJI recommendations.

-- *Cora Morgan, executive director of Onashowewin, an aboriginal restorative justice agency.*

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The report was a very thoughtful piece of work based on wide consultations and sound legal analysis. Unfortunately, the report has not been acted upon in any substantial way.

Governments, courts and communities have only made a few relative minor changes in the broader scheme of things. Criminal justice administration remains relative isolated from the recommendations in the report.

Sadly, the situation has grown even worse in the last 25 years. While the report was produced in an atmosphere of crisis, given the failure of the criminal justice system to protect vulnerable people, we are now in a perpetual state of emergency in many Aboriginal communities.

The report's recommendation that Aboriginal peoples assume formal governmental responsibility for addressing and reducing criminal behaviour has not been encouraged by either the federal or provincial governments.

-- John Borrows, among Canada's leading scholars on indigenous legal traditions and a law professor at the University of Victoria.

## **First Nations reveal concern at DGR hearing**

[Canada First Perspective](#)

17 September 2013 13:26

Scott Dunn, Sun Times, Owen Sound

KINCARDINE - Saugeen First Nation Chief Randall Kahgee told a panel considering whether long-term burial of low- and medium-level nuclear waste would be safe beside Lake Huron that Saugeen Ojibway Nation isn't "fundamentally opposed" to the proposal, but it must approve the plan for it to proceed.

Asked by joint panel chair, Dr. Stella Swanson to define what the native community's support would entail, Saugeen Chief Kahgee said, "This is the trillion dollar question" and is one his community has been working on with OPG. SON's people can't just leave if a problem arises with OPG's proposed deep geologic repository for nuclear waste, he said. But SON acknowledges there is a waste management problem and wants to carefully weigh the merits of the proposal. He acknowledged his people have fears, some valid and others uninformed. Kahgee also said the SON's treaty rights and his people's interests must be respected. "So it's a lot of work ahead."

The facility is proposed to be placed within the Bruce nuclear site near Tiverton, which is in traditional Saugeen Ojibway Nation territory, which includes the local Saugeen and Cape Croker bands. It was recently revealed that OPG president Tom Mitchell promised its deep geologic repository won't proceed without SON approval. Swanson's opening comments acknowledged the project's proposed location is in the SON and Metis traditional territory. Cape Croker Chief Arlene Chegahno in her

opening remarks said it's no exaggeration that the DGR proposal "has the potential to change our territory and the future of our people."

This underground vault would hold up to 200,000 cubic metres of low-and intermediate-level nuclear waste 680 metres beneath the surface, with a multiple-layer 200-metre cap of shale and sedimentary, low-permeable limestone above the DGR.

The DGR would be about one kilometre from Lake Huron, at OPG's Western Waste Management Facility, which accepts low, medium and high-level waste now. OPG owns all 20 nuclear reactors in Ontario, eight of them leased to Bruce Power. All send their low and medium-level waste like mops, coveralls and tools to the Bruce now. If approved, that waste would be buried for centuries in the DGR, rather than stored above ground.

The Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, the nuclear regulator, concluded OPG's proposal "meets all regulatory requirements" and it has "adequately demonstrated," its safety related to people and the environment.

Dr. Patsy Thompson of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission concluded the OPG project is "unlikely to cause adverse environmental effects," a phrase she said she uses because that's the language setting the standard used in the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act.

The regulator recommends issuing a licence to build the facility, subject to approval of the Environmental Assessment. Monitoring of OPG's compliance would be ongoing and would be reported on at public hearings, the CNSC's Peter Elder said. After four weeks of hearings, the independent joint review panel, established by the CNSC, will make recommendations to the federal government which will decide if environmental concerns preclude the project from proceeding.

If the federal government decides the project can go ahead, the review panel would then decide on the licence to prepare the site for the facility and build it. Construction would take five to seven years and so if final approvals came in 2014, the DGR could be ready in the early 2020s, OPG spokesman Neal Kelly said in an interview Monday.

If it doesn't, OPG would continue to transport the waste from Darlington and Pickering nuclear sites and store it above ground at the Bruce site, as it has for 40 years, Kelly said.

Ontario Power Generation vice president Laurie Swami said that this summer OPG reached an agreement with the Saugeen Ojibway Nation and the Metis which she called a "milestone" toward addressing their concerns, which she will elaborate on at the hearings Oct. 7.



Swami, who began her remarks by thanking SON, told the board in opening statements that studies have shown the project "would not result in any significant adverse environmental effects." Later when questioned by the public, she qualified her answer to say its studies show significant adverse environmental effects would be "unlikely."

The CNSC identified no adverse impact on any potential or established Aboriginal treaty rights that would be caused by the DGR, Thompson said.

Review panelists challenged OPG a few times on its assertions that the project was safe and questioned OPG's degree of confidence in them.

OPG expert Mark Jensen said studies considered glaciation and earthquakes among other threats. He said the limestone vaults could collapse somewhere between "several tens of thousands of years" and maybe, "one million" years into the future. But he also said the cap of shale over the limestone vaults would still provide a protective barrier "forever."

Members of the public asked about why two deep geological repositories are proposed, potentially doubling the cost and the possible risks. A second vault is proposed to store highly radioactive fuel but it isn't the subject of this joint review panel.

OPG's Swami said OPG has no plans to put high-level waste together with the lower level waste.

But if there were a nuclear incident, the Nuclear Liability Act would not cover the DGR because it only covers failures at reactors with nuclear fuel, the CNSC's Elder told a questioner who asked if OPG would compensate First Nations people and others in the surrounding area. Swami of OPG said the Ministry of the Environment would have requirements OPG would follow.

Hearings are being held in the Kincardine Royal Canadian Legion for three weeks and in Port Elgin at the Saugeen Shores Community Complex Rotary Hall for the fourth week. A detailed list of registered speakers and background is available on the CNSC website at [www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca](http://www.ceaa-acee.gc.ca).

## **Museum updates aboriginal exhibit**

[Sherwood Park News](#)

Monday, September 16, 2013 3:42:04 MDT PM  
Stephen Wagers



*Aaron Paquette's The Lady in the Woods which is on display at the Strathcona County Museum and Archives. Photo Supplied*

Strathcona County Museum and Archives is preparing to unveil its newly revamped aboriginal exhibit.

The exhibit, which is called The Past Shows Us The Way is a permanent exhibit that expands on the old aboriginal exhibit by adding works of art from Metis artist Aaron Paquette, new artifacts and hands-on activities for children to make arts and crafts that reflect the aboriginal culture.

Museum Curator and Manager Starr Hanson said it took more than two years and the help from an aboriginal consultant to get the exhibit together.

"We wanted the exhibit to present a more accurate reflection of their culture and for

us to be more knowledgeable (about) the culture when we were doing our interpretation," she said.

Hanson went on to talk about why she felt it was important to make the upgrades to the exhibit.

"What I've found is aboriginal culture in Strathcona County is a better secret than even the museum," she said.

"A lot of people don't announce that they are from the aboriginal (community) and we wanted to recognize those people because it is part of Strathcona County. We wanted to make sure we represent them as well as our pioneers."

The centrepieces of the exhibit are the works by Paquette. He has provided the museum with a stained glass medicine wheel that has been set into the exhibit's window, as well as a colourful wall mural, which depicts certain symbolic objects in it that people can look for almost like a Where's Waldo book.

"In the mural (Paquette) has painted small items that the children don't just look at the art as art, but they have to find the items in the mural," Hanson explained.

“(Sometimes) children look at art as ‘It’s pretty, it’s colourful’, but this is part of programming and they have to look into the art, so they get more of a connection with what the artist has done.”

While the artwork and the rest of the exhibit will be around for years to come, the museum is also hosting an opening day celebration for the exhibit on Sept. 22 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

There will be featured musicians such as the Blackstone Drummers, Amanda Woodward and rapper Angela Gladue. Sun and Moon Visionaries will also be there serving bannock and tea, there will be some arts and crafts for children to create their own dream catchers and an aboriginal elder will be on hand to provide a prayer and bless the exhibit.

Admission to the celebratory events on Sept. 22 is by donation.

## **First Nations report additional spills at Cold Lake: The Alberta Energy Regulator says they both spills involved produced water**

[Canadian Manufacturing](#)

September 17, 2013

COLD LAKE, Alta.—Cold Lake First Nation says it is concerned about two more leaks at an oil sands project in northeastern Alberta, bringing to six the total number of recent leaks in recent months.

Chief Bernice Martial said she is worried about the safety of drinking water, animals and vegetation in her region.

[In July, Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. said a mechanical failure at an old well was behind ongoing bitumen seepage at its oilsands project on the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range.](#)

About 1.5 million litres of bitumen has since been recovered from bush and muskeg in the area.

The band said in a news release that it recently learned of two additional leaks of bitumen, but the Alberta Energy Regulator says they both involved produced water back in May and June.

Spokeswoman Cara Tobin said the waste water from the two sites, about 8,000 litres in total, has since been cleaned up.

Company spokeswoman Zoe Addington confirmed there have been no further bitumen discoveries.

"Each location has been secured and cleanup of bitumen at the four other sites is ongoing," she said in an email.

The last report posted by the regulator tallies dead wildlife from the leak at two beavers, 46 small mammals, 49 birds and 105 amphibians.

CNRL has been ordered to limit the amount of steam it pumps into the reservoir while the regulator investigates.

Gerry Protti, chairman of the regulator, said that the spill has significantly affected the company's finances.

"We're working extremely hard to come up with the cause of the issue and resolution around it. But when you're taking 40,000-plus barrels of production out of their cash flow, that has a direct impact," he said Monday in Calgary.

"But that shows the importance that the province is attaching to development occurring with the minimum environmental impact."

Last month, company president Steve Laut said he didn't expect the ongoing spill would have a long-term impact on production.

He said he's confident the company can either repair problematic wellbores or adjust its steaming strategy to work around them.

## **First Nations defend illegal Manitoba smoke shop in provincial court**

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 17, 2013

Chinta Puxley

BRANDON, Man. - Arriving on horseback — some wearing headdresses and carrying ceremonial staffs — members of a Manitoba First Nation appeared in court Tuesday to defend their right to operate an illegal smoke shop which sold half-price cigarettes.

The Dakota Chundee smoke shop south of Virden, Man., opened in 2011 and has been raided several times by police. It has since shut down, but the battle goes well beyond the sale of Mohawk tobacco from Quebec for \$40 a carton.

Craig Blacksmith, with the Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation, has been charged with a raft of offences under Manitoba's Tobacco Tax Act. Blacksmith, who is representing himself in court, said he isn't beholden to provincial law and will argue the First Nation doesn't have official treaty status with Canada, so the government has no jurisdiction.

The province had no right to raid the smoke shop and seize its stock, he said.

"To them, they conducted raids," he said in an interview outside court. "But, until they prove jurisdiction, those are nothing more than armed robberies. Break and enter, kidnapping, extortion — that's what the province is facing today."

Canupawakpa First Nation is in a relatively rare situation in Manitoba. The band had a treaty with the British, but current members don't have official treaty status. They have been referred to as essentially refugees within Canada, a term Blacksmith said is offensive.

"We're going in (to court) as a sovereign people," he said. "There is no justification that the Crown's sovereignty supersedes our sovereignty."

The issue of illegal cigarettes has cropped up across Canada with several provinces moving to shut down the untaxed trade. Rainbow Tobacco, a company that operates in a Mohawk community near Montreal, had its stock seized in aboriginal communities in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The largest raid was on a reserve south of Edmonton where 16 million cigarettes were being stored for distribution and sale on reserves across Western Canada. Three people are facing offences that carry a maximum fine of \$20,000, six months in jail, or both.

The Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations has weighed in, saying the provincial government doesn't have the authority to apply its tobacco tax laws on reserves and should butt out.

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, said aboriginal people have been trading tobacco with each other for thousands of years.

"The recent arrival of provincial regulatory systems and laws to prevent indigenous trade in tobacco are completely unacceptable," he said in an interview Tuesday.

"We have the Dakota people who are willing to stand on their economic sovereignty and assert their inherent rights to be able to participate in a free-trade economy with other indigenous communities."

The federal government is underfunding First Nations and they have a right to support themselves, he added.

Nepinak said this is a dispute unlikely to be settled by a provincially appointed judge, who will probably just "apply the status quo." This is an issue that will have to be argued before the Supreme Court of Canada, he said.

"It's going to be a long and protracted process," he said. "This is just the start of it."

The Manitoba government has said the possession and sale of unmarked tobacco products is illegal under the Tobacco Tax Act. The province has said the law applies to all tobacco sales, regardless of whether the cigarettes are sold on or off reserve, by aboriginal or non-aboriginal businesses.

Scott Connors, a special investigator with Manitoba Finance, testified Tuesday that all businesses with more than \$10,000 in sales must register to pay taxes with Manitoba Finance.

The Dakota Chundee smoke shop never applied for a licence with the province, Connors added.

The shop was selling packs of cigarettes for \$5 and cartons for \$40, he said. The cigarettes appeared to be federally legal cigarettes, complete with Health Canada warnings, but were not marked for sale in Manitoba, Connors said.

## **Aboriginal pipe ceremony commentary causes controversy: University of Saskatchewan professor criticizes ceremonies held on campus**

[CBC News](#)

Sep 17, 2013 9:56 PM





*This pipe ceremony was held to mark the first anniversary of the prime minister's apology to residential schools survivors. (Patrick Doyle/Canadian Press)*

A University of Saskatchewan professor's letter to the editor this week is creating some controversy.

The letter, published in the university's On Campus News, was written by Kevin Flynn. It criticizes First Nations pipe ceremonies held on campus.

An assistant professor in the department of English at the University of Saskatchewan, Flynn took issue with instructions that were emailed to him by the university in preparation for a pipe ceremony that was held there earlier this month.

Flynn said he found the protocol for the spiritual ceremony exclusionary.

"Three or maybe four of these seven items were directed towards woman in their 'moon time' - which as I understand it means menstruating - and the various ways in which their participation in this ceremony would be limited," Flynn said. "I discussed this with a colleague of mine and we were both sort of outraged by it simply because it excluded people."

Omeasoo Butt, a graduate student at the U of S, said Flynn is speaking about something he does not understand.

"Aboriginal spirituality is not written down, it is open to interpretation," Butt said. "So we all interpret it in our own way. His interpretation came from a place that people respect. He is at the university. He is an English professor. He has a PhD in literature. So people think he is a super, super smart guy. But he doesn't and he made an uninformed opinion."

Butt said that in First Nations cultures menstruating women are considered very powerful and this is why they do not participate in certain ceremonies.

Flynn maintains that he just wanted to create dialogue with his editorial comment.

"My call instead was for the university to think about how those practices, those events of whatever sort, might be adapted to better reflect the values of the entire campus community and better include everybody," he said.

## Aboriginals face Canada's 'dark past' at hearings

[24 hours Vancouver](#)



Tuesday, September 17, 2013  
6:47:27 PDT PM

*Hundreds gathered around False Creek Tuesday to witness a flotilla of ocean-going canoes paddled by aboriginal youth and non-aboriginal supporters. (PHOTO DAVID P. BALL/ 24 HOURS)*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission begins four days of hearings in Vancouver Wednesday into residential school abuses.

Hundreds gathered around False Creek Tuesday to

witness a flotilla of ocean-going canoes paddled by aboriginal youth and non-aboriginal supporters.

It was part of a week of reconciliation for Canada's residential schools, in which roughly 150,000 students were placed in church-run schools, many abused sexually and physically.

Watching the boats arrive, Irene Stevens recalled the day authorities arrived at her home to take her to Lejac Indian Residential School at Fraser Lake, B.C.

"They had a gun in their hands," Stevens told 24 hours. "They told my dad that if none of us children went to the residential school, they were going to take (social support funding) away from him.

"We come from a family of 12, but now we've dwindled down to five – lots of drugs and alcohol in our lives now. In a way, it's kind of hard for me to be here. But I'd really like to try to get all this behind me."

Fellow Lejac student Edward Dennis said the school left him with little but "hatred and animosity" towards Canada. He recalled three students who died trying to escape from the school's abuses one winter.

"They were running away," he said. "One of them turned around at Piper's Glen. He could hear the other three fall through the ice."

He said manual labour taught aboriginal students "how to serve the white people – then you were a good Indian.

"I've prayed to the creator to get me out of that," he said. "I don't want to hate any more."

Another survivor told 24 hours his memories of residential school were of "beatings and starvation." Recently, widespread nutritional and scientific experiments on unwitting children were revealed.

"All they taught us was how to work," said John Dennis. "We did all the work on a farm – looking after the cows, horses and chickens.

"They got the money, but we got nothing. We hardly ever ate chicken or eggs. We got garbage. Lots of times I had to steal food, especially when I worked in the garden."

For the leader of the B.C. First Nations Summit, himself a school survivor, the legacy was disconnection and brokenness.

"It's created a whole foundation of dysfunction, which was the government's intention to begin with," Grand Chief Ed John said. "It was the government's policy, as the prime minister acknowledged, to 'kill the Indian in the child.' That's what these Indian residential schools were for.

"They went after our families, our communities where we lived, our languages, our cultures, our songs and teachings – to disrupt them (and) Christianize and civilize us ... Events like this help our people move forward, to acknowledge the past with other Canadians ... and for them to understand and collectively try to reconcile that dark past."

## Largest class ever begins a year of study at Nunavut Sivuniksavut

[Nunatsiaq News](#)

September 18, 2013

Lisa Gregoire



*Ipellie Ootoova of Pond Inlet, left, and Curtis Taqqaugaq of Igloolik, both 21, are looking forward to the year ahead at Nunavut Sivuniksavut. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)*



*First-year Nunavut Sivuniksavut students in Daniel Guay's Contemporary Inuit Issues class read aloud the transcript of a landmark meeting of Arctic Inuit in what was then Coppermine in 1970. A jumping off point for Inuit political organization, the meeting spawned the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada in 1971, which later became ITK. It's a great starting point for talking about land claims, Guay said. (PHOTO BY LISA GREGOIRE)*

OTTAWA — It's a Friday afternoon at the Nunavut Sivuniksavut downtown Ottawa campus. The students, looking like any other young college types

with their piercings and gelled hair, are reading history to understand the present.



The 39 first-year students have been split into two classes under instructors Daniel Guay and NS alumnus Melissa Irwin and are reading aloud the transcript of a landmark meeting of Arctic Inuit in what was then Coppermine in July 1970.

It may seem odd to read history for a modern issues class — but when it comes to Inuit written history, it's all modern.

"You have just read the complete meeting minutes from history," said Irwin after the students had applauded themselves. "Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, which means 'Inuit Working Toward Unity in Canada,' came out of that meeting. They later became ITK, 'Inuit Are United in Canada.'"

The minutes are written like a play. Students each pick a character from their home region and read their part. Well-known elders such as Piita Irniq, who is still alive today, actually attended that meeting, making it a part of living history.

"It's a great departure point for our classes when we start learning about land claims," said Guay.

This is Nunavut Sivuniksavut's biggest intake of first-year students ever and, unlike recent years which were dominated by women, the roster includes 15 men.

The majority of students range in age from 18 to 20, they come from 13 different communities, and they will spend the next eight months taking courses in history, culture, language, computers, contemporary issues, land claims and government relations.

They have all left home to learn more about home. They will also learn how to live without family support, how to budget money, how to resist alcohol and focus on school work, how to function in a city full of noise and distraction, and how to be leaders and cultural performers.

Curtis Taqqaugaq of Igloolik and Ipellie Ootoova of Pond Inlet, both 21, are two of those students. They couldn't be more different. Taqqaugaq is emotionally raw and unsure of himself. He did a lot of hunting growing up and is making the transition now to modern education. He misses his family terribly.

"There are moments I feel so homesick, I wonder if I'll be able to make it," he says, eyes welling with tears. "The city scares me sometimes. I miss the sounds of all my nephews. I don't have a parent to take care of me — that's another struggle. There's a different kind of silence down here."

Ootoova, whose parents died when he was young, was raised mostly by his older brother David but nonetheless has become an independent, self-assured adult.

An actor, Ootoova has starred in several movies including the [Quebec production Maïna, and John Houston's The White Archer](#). He has also appeared in commercials and a short film for the Embrace Life Council.

"I wanted to learn about Inuit history," he said about his decision to apply for the NS program. "I need to know the history of Inuit if I want to play characters in movies."

Having lived away from home as a teenager attending Inuksuk High School in Iqaluit, Ootoova says he doesn't really get homesick and credits sports for giving him confidence and self-esteem.

He has taken Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, or ASIST, and says he enjoys helping people talk through periods of distress. Sitting across from him, Taqqaugaq said Ootoova has already counselled him during his first week away from Igloolik.

Taqqaugaq performed with the rest of his classmates at [Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami's suicide awareness and prevention event on Parliament Hill](#) Sept. 10. It's a subject painfully close to him.

"I don't consider myself different from the other youth in Nunavut," he said when asked about the challenge of coping with life in the North. "I went through many different things. I contemplated suicide. You just have to know that people go through similar situations."

Classroom work at NS always begins on the second week of the program, after a week-long retreat at a Quebec farm, several hours north of Ottawa.

Murray Angus, NS acting co-ordinator this year while Morley Hanson is on leave, said the retreat helps the students ease into the program and get to know each other.

They usually go back there for a week in November, he said, when the honeymoon has faded and students are homesick and stressed out.

Shauna Seeteenak, 21 of Baker Lake, is like Ootoova — she's too excited to feel homesick yet. "I'm still trying to let it sink in that I'm living in Ottawa," she said. "I know it's going to be hard but I know I can do it."

Seeteenak said she is keen to learn about her history and culture but, as a singer-songwriter, she also looks forward to performing, something the NS students do nearly every month, mostly at public events and schools.



She also feels she will become a better songwriter if she understands her own history better.

When asked who their mentors were, growing up, all three named parents, grandparents and teachers who were instrumental in helping guide them through life.

For Taqqaugaq, it was his mother Therese Ipkangnak. "She had a mouth on her that went on and on," he said, laughing. "She said whatever she wanted. I guess I get that from her."

## **New database makes it easier to find certified Aboriginal businesses across Canada**

[Canada NewsWire](#)

September 18, 2013

CALGARY, Sept. 18, 2013 /CNW/ - The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) today launched the "Certified Aboriginal Business" platform, with support from patron sponsor Suncor Energy. This Canada-wide directory of pre-qualified Aboriginal businesses is publicly-available on [www.ccab.com](http://www.ccab.com) and will also provide a place to publicize work opportunities for the Aboriginal business community.

"Increasingly, corporations have begun to realize the value that Aboriginal businesses bring to the table, but it's not always obvious where to find Aboriginal contractors and suppliers," says JP Gladu, president and chief executive officer, Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. "By creating a searchable, country-wide database for certified Aboriginal businesses, we are providing a starting point for those looking to source a new supplier."

In addition to serving as a resource for Aboriginal businesses to list basic company information, the platform will also ensure each registered business receives a physical certificate verifying Aboriginal ownership - a useful asset for businesses that are bidding on new work.

"Aboriginal businesses know the customs, environment, and needs of their communities better than anyone else," says Gary Hart, senior vice president of Supply Chain and Field Logistics, Suncor Energy. "We've found that knowledge to be invaluable in our relationships with Aboriginal suppliers in the Wood Buffalo region of northern Alberta, and we hope the Certified Aboriginal Business platform can help us engage more Aboriginal businesses right across Canada."

The Certified Aboriginal Business platform has been in development for around one year, and includes approximately 250 Aboriginal-owned businesses at launch. CCAB expects that number to increase.

In addition to Suncor, the platform has been supported by sponsors Enbridge and CN, and CCAB has worked closely with the Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA) to align the new database with existing, more region-specific Aboriginal business directories and work opportunity platforms.

For more information about the CCAB, please visit [ccab.com](http://ccab.com) or on Twitter [@ccabjp](https://twitter.com/ccabjp).

For more information about Suncor Energy, please visit [suncor.com](http://suncor.com), on Twitter [@SuncorEnergy](https://twitter.com/SuncorEnergy) or read the company's blog, [OSQAR](#).

SOURCE The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business

## Truth commission marks history of Canadian residential schools

[Globe and Mail](#)

Sep. 17 2013, 9:55 PM EDT

Iain Bailey



*An all Nations Canoe Gathering at Science World in Vancouver September 17, 2013 where they were welcomed in a traditional ceremony to the Coast Salish lands. Canoe gathering marks the opening to the Week of Reconciliation to be held in Vancouver. (John Lehmann/The Globe and Mail)*

For the sixth time in the past three years, the independent national commission formed to highlight the troubling history of residential schools in

Canada is holding a national gathering amid hopes it will educate all Canadians on the subject.

The four-day event on the grounds of the Pacific National Exhibition begins Wednesday. It will include opportunities for residential-school survivors to tell their stories as they have in previous hearings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, but there are other components of the proceedings that include panels, youth programs and cultural performances.

As part of the inclusive approach of the event – this time to be held in Vancouver – there was an All-Nations Canoe Gathering in False Creek on Tuesday.

Participants, including B.C. Aboriginal Relations Minister John Rustad, paddled cedar, dugout canoes from Kits Point to Science World for a traditional welcoming ceremony of the Coast Salish Peoples.

B.C. has proclaimed Sept. 16 to 22 as Reconciliation Week.

The University of British Columbia has suspended most classes on its Vancouver campus on Thursday to allow and encourage the university community to participate in the national event. Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson is also to sit on a sharing panel at the national commission event proclaiming a Year of Reconciliation – the first such city to do so as part of a series of events including workshops, cultural and arts programs.

“The thing about the national events as separate and distinct from the community gatherings leading up to it are just the magnitude of it, the size and scope, the length being four days long,” said Marie Wilson, one of three commissioners of the reconciliation commission.

“But the most significant thing is the sheer numbers of people including, very importantly the significant number of non-indigenous people who attend national events.”

Ms. Wilson said it’s important to note that the story propelling the work of the commission is not just about aboriginal history. “This story is about Canadian history. This story is about something that happened to little children in our country over many decades,” she said. “The history belongs to all of us whether we have known it or not before now.”

The commission was established in 2007 as an independent body to inform all Canadians about what happened in the 150 years of residential schools in Canada. It has a five-year mandate and is expected to deliver a full report by 2014.

Linc Kesler, a senior adviser on aboriginal affairs to the president of the University of British Columbia, says a solid turnout at the canoe gathering Tuesday points to a greater awareness in Vancouver of the whole process of reconciliation than in other communities across Canada.

“My real hope is more people go to the truth and reconciliation event and are able to take a few minutes out of their lives to listen to some of the survivors and hear a little bit of that personal history.” In an interim report released in 2012, the \$60-million commission said comprehensive awareness efforts are required to ensure Canada fully understands the pain of students who attended the schools with suggestions that every province and territory require public-school curriculum to assess what is being taught on the residential schools.

Mr. Rustad, the Aboriginal Affairs Minister, said the commission has been educating all Canadians on what the aboriginal community went through.

“I look at this as a very important process of reaching out, acknowledging the challenges that were created around this and all of us as Canadians learning about and finding out how to build a strong and true reconciliation over time.”

The seventh and final national event will be held in Edmonton next March.

## **BC, Saskatchewan agencies 'failed' First Nations toddler: report**

[The Tyee](#)

September 17, 2013 12:07 pm

Katie Hyslop

Three child welfare agencies, including British Columbia's, failed to keep one young First Nations girl safe from a grandfather with a history of addiction and criminal convictions. That's the conclusion of a report released this morning by B.C.'s Representative for Children and Youth.

"Out of Sight: How One Aboriginal Child's Best Interests Were Lost Between Two Provinces" details the events leading up to the apprehension of a three-and-a-half year old girl from her maternal grandfather's house near Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, in 2008.

Just 26-and-a-half pounds when RCMP apprehended her, and suffering from bruises, scratches, and an untreated collarbone fraction, doctors determined the toddler showed signs of starvation, abuse, and neglect. Her maternal grandfather and his partner were convicted of failing to provide the necessities of life in February 2012 and sentenced to three years in prison.

The young girl had been on the B.C.'s Ministry of Children and Family Development's radar since birth in 2004. Her mother was a documented IV drug user, who had fled her father's home in Saskatchewan years earlier for B.C. because of a poor home life. By the time the child was sent to live with her grandfather, she had been moved by the ministry nine times.

She was finally removed from her grandfather's house 18 months later. Now eight years old, she still lives in foster care.

But rather than focusing on the crimes against her, the report focuses on government accountability, accusing the ministry, the Saskatchewan government, and the First Nations Child and Family Services in Saskatchewan of not doing their due diligence.

In a press conference earlier this morning, Representative for Children and Youth Mary Ellen Turpel Lafond said the ministry relied on a "faulty" housing report and criminal background check for the grandfather from First Nations Child and Family Services. The ministry also did not follow up after the agency refused to monitor the child's care.

"The agency wrote to the ministry in B.C. that it would do nothing after the placement of the child, and that all the responsibility would be the sole responsibility of the Ministry for Children and Family Development in B.C.," she told reporters.

No one from the ministry accompanied the child to Saskatchewan or visited the grandfather's home prior to or after the child was placed there. Turpel Lafond says ministry officials indicated there might have been budgeting issues, but she says there is at least one case of two ministry social workers accompanying a child to a placement in China at much greater cost.

Turpel Lafond says the grandfather and another child -- up to eight children had been placed in his care before his arrest -- hitchhiked to B.C. from Saskatchewan to pick up the child. He then demanded to be reimbursed by the ministry for two return plane tickets. The ministry gave him the money, which he reportedly used to buy codeine pills.

It is unknown how the grandfather and two children returned to Saskatchewan. However it is known the mother, from whose care the child was being removed, accompanied them.

"The First Nations agency in general exhibited shockingly poor levels of record keeping and professionalism in this case, which leads me to have great concern for its work in other cases involving vulnerable children," said Turpel Lafond, "and great concern of whether the B.C. director of child welfare may rely on work of that agency in inter-provincial transfers or other cases."

But ultimate authority for child welfare in Saskatchewan falls to the province's Ministry for Social Services. The Representative has met with members of the B.C. and Saskatchewan ministries, and both have early copies of her report a couple of months ago.

Turpel LaFond noted she could not find a single province that keeps track of children who leave or enter their province for foster placements, even though it's required under the Provincial/Territorial Protocol on Children and Families Moving Between Provinces. Neither does the protocol make any mention of first nations families, although it is currently under review.

She called on the federal government, which directly funds First Nations Child and Family Services, to take a more direct role in ensuring First Nations children are protected.

"The federal government takes the position that it simply funds (First Nations agencies). The quality of their work is dependent on the provinces," she said.

"I think it's very difficult that you say that you simply fund service, but if nobody's actually doing the service, there's a safety gap for the child. Who will provide the assurance that it's really happening? And when we know it isn't happening, what steps are taken?"

Minister for Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux is scheduled to address the report in a teleconference with reporters today at 12:30 p.m.

*Katie Hyslop reports on education and youth issues for The Tyee Solutions Society. Follow her on Twitter.*

## **Historic Vancouver Island land deal prompts human rights claim**

[Times Colonist](#)

September 17, 2013

Sarah Petrescu

As a group of Island First Nations awaits a landmark ruling from an international human rights body, their chief negotiator is taking the opportunity to reach out to the public about how international law could bridge an important gap in land disputes.

Ladysmith lawyer Robert Morales will speak on indigenous land rights under international law at the University of Victoria on Thursday, part of the Centre for Co-operative and Community-Based Economy series.

"In a nutshell, the recognition of indigenous peoples' land rights didn't exist during the time of discovery. It was a different mindset," Morales said.

He will touch on cases around the world but focus mostly on one here at home: The Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group's petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights over thousands of hectares of land given away by the provincial government in the late 1880s.

It's a history most Vancouver Island residents likely never learned.

In a deal to promote development on the Island, the federal and provincial governments included about 109,000 hectares of traditional First Nations land in a

parcel granted to coal baron Robert Dunsmuir for a railway in 1867. This became the E&N Railway.

The land stretched from Ladysmith to Victoria and covered territories of six local nations, the Hul'qumi'num, who were not consulted or compensated in the deal. The Hul'qumi'num includes Cowichan Tribes, Lake Cowichan First Nation, Halalt First Nation, Penelakut Tribe, Lyackson First Nation and Stz'uminus First Nation.

"Sadly, that was the mindset back then. Indigenous [people] were seen as inferior and heathens," Morales said.

While a land claims process was later established, the problem for the Hul'qumi'num is that the two levels of government will not negotiate transfers of or compensation for private land. The land is now owned by three major logging companies — Hancock Timber Resource Group, TimberWest Forest Corporation and Island Timberlands.

"This goes beyond land rights," Morales said. "The cultural loss of these territories is immeasurable. They were spiritual sites, hunting grounds, communities."

Local First Nations now face gates, trespassing threats and a constant stream of clearcuts in the area. "The devastation to the area is considerable," he said.

This has brought together a variety of human rights advocates, environment, church and citizen groups to see the land protected. If the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights rules in favour of the Hul'qumi'num, it will issue a report and recommendations for resolving the case.

Ana Maria Peredo, director of the Gustavson School of Business and Centre for Co-operative and Community-Based Economy, said it was important to include an aboriginal perspective in the program. Promoting co-operative business practices with different cultures is crucial, she said.

*Robert Morales speaks 4 p.m. Thursday in the Cornett Building, Room A120.*

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## **Residential school legacy a 'horrible cycle of abuse'**

[The Province](#)

September 18, 2013

Elaine O'Connor





*Dallas Yellowfly, whose father was sent to a residential school at age six, poses with a mask he created to tell the story of a mythical woman who steals children. **Photograph by:** Ron Perron Photography, The Province*

As a child, Vancouver Aboriginal educator Dallas Yellowfly recalls hearing the story of a wild woman who lurks in the forest ready to snatch children. It's a traditional First Nations story used to discourage children from wandering. Sadly, it's more than allegorical.

In a very real way, it came to pass, when an estimated 150,000 First Nations children were ripped from families, sent to residential schools, stripped of their language and culture and often abused.

"The story of the wild woman is the segue into the real story of the Indian agents who would take children to residential schools," Yellowfly said.

On Wednesday, the public school cultural facilitator will reenact that story at the University of the Fraser Valley's Indian Residential Schools Day of Learning. His presentation includes a theatre piece, Qualena, plus testimony from two survivors of St. Mary's residential school in Mission, Cyril Pierre and Joe Ginger, who detail the abuse they endured and what they've had to go through for compensation.

Yellowfly knows firsthand how that trauma persists today.

His father, an Albertan of Blackfoot heritage, was sent to residential school at age six. The experience scarred him and he turned to substance abuse and crime.

Yellowfly's mother, a criminology student, met his father while he was in prison. They married and had Dallas, but his father hit him as an infant so his mother severed ties. Yellowfly healed his wounds by learning about his culture and teaching the legacies of residential schools.



"It's creating this horrible cycle of abuse," said the UFV graduate. "There are generations of broken families disconnected from their culture and traditions and ashamed of who they are."

UFV's program runs at the Abbotsford, Chilliwack and Mission and Hope campuses, and is free and open to the public.

UFV Indigenous Studies professor Wenona Victor said in a statement the university had a responsibility to engage.

"There is a misconception out there that this is only First Nations history. It is part of Canadian history," Victor said.

More than 130 residential schools operated in Canada from 1875 to 1996. Two were in the Fraser Valley: Coqualeetza in Chilliwack and St. Mary's in Mission.

The UFV event coincides with the national Truth and Reconciliation Commission at the Pacific National Exhibition Sept. 18-21. That four-day event is an opportunity for survivors to share experiences.

For a schedule of UFV events visit: [UFV.ca/day-of-learning](http://UFV.ca/day-of-learning).

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## **Unethical experiments highlight need for aboriginal scientists**

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 18, 2013



*People raise their paddles on Tuesday as they gather on False Creek during an all-nations canoe gathering, part of Reconciliation Week in Vancouver. Photograph by: Darryl Dyck, The Canadian Press, Vancouver Sun*

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission is holding a national hearing in Vancouver this month. Not only were many native children sexually and emotionally abused in residential schools and sanatoriums, we now know some were subjected to unethical medical experimentation.

Such actions were consistent with the official federal policy of "killing the Indian and saving the child." For example, in response to a 30 to 50 per cent mortality rate for children enrolled in western Canadian residential schools in 1910, the superintendent of Ottawa's Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Scott, stated: "This alone does not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is geared toward the final solution of our Indian Problem." Scientists also displayed a cultural bias against Canada's natives. In 1942, they interpreted the physical symptoms of malnutrition in First Nations adults and residential students as negative personality traits. In the scientists' own words, the aboriginals showed "shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia" all explained "as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race."

This racial discrimination guided the design of scientific experiments that saw, for example, dental care withheld to control a scientific variable and thus ensure objective clinical results. For the next 10 years First Nations people were experimental guinea pigs under the jurisdiction of government scientists. In other

words, First Nations people were colonized by these scientists; a process known as "scientific colonialism."

Scientific colonialism arises from systemic racism and negative stereotyping. Like the Deep South, a racially segregated health care system operated in Canada.

There were aboriginal wards, aboriginal annexes, and fully fledged aboriginal sanatoriums and hospitals where unethical experimentation and substandard treatment occurred. Segregation ended when Medicare was introduced in the 1960s. Idle No More did not exist in those days to challenge the racism, cruelty, illegality and human rights abuses of scientific colonialism.

Scientific colonialism still lurks within the corridors of education, expressed more subtly as racial/gender biases that favour Eurocentric masculinity; consequently, women and aboriginals enrolled in university science and engineering programs are more likely to be "weeded out."

One study noted that university success depended in part on students being able to "negotiate a culture characterized by white, masculine values and behavioural norms, hidden within an ideology of meritocracy."

Discrimination and other factors have resulted in far fewer aboriginals obtaining a bachelor's degree (eight per cent and 23 per cent for aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations, respectively, ages 25 to 64; 2006 Census). The gap widens at the doctorate level where only 0.15 per cent of aboriginals compared with 0.7 per cent of other Canadians earned a PhD (2006 Census).

Assembly of First Nations national Chief Shawn Atleo stated the nutritional experiments on First Nations children would never have happened if First Nations had been in charge at the schools. It is important also to note these experiments would not have been conducted if aboriginal scientists were in charge of the experiments, because of their different cultural beliefs. Unfortunately, there are fewer aboriginal students majoring in the biological, physical and mathematical sciences (seven per cent and 14.5 per cent for aboriginal and non-aboriginal populations, respectively, ages 25-44; 2001 Census). The statistics for doctoral attainment in the sciences are not available, but given the paucity of aboriginals with BSc degrees, there will be only a handful of aboriginal scientists with the required PhD.

In order to increase the number of aboriginal scientists who will change the way science is done, it is clear programs to attract, retain, and enhance the academic success of aboriginal science students need to be in place at all levels of education.

Rather than a statistic of underrepresentation of aboriginal people majoring in the sciences, Canada should be aiming for a statistic of over-representation for three main reasons: (1) to eliminate colonialism from the scientific enterprise and implement wisdom-in-action, which is endemic to aboriginal people who privilege respectful relationships and environmental sustainability; (2) to bring a much-needed creative intellectual diversity to scientific and engineering disciplines; and (3) to ensure provincial economic stability arising from aboriginal people's participation in the economy rather than a dependence on it.

Educational progress is only possible when political and scientific colonialism are replaced with uncompromised respect for the human rights of aboriginal peoples.

On the world stage the Government of Canada has promoted human rights as a priority, vigorously opposing the oppression of traditionally marginalized people. We look forward to this same agenda being advanced during the October visit of the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples.

Glen S. Aikenhead is professor emeritus, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan and co-author of Bridging Cultures. Dr. Lillian E. Dyck is a senator and professor emeritus, Neuropsychiatry Research, University of Saskatchewan; and deputy chair, Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples.

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## **First Nations assert rights to resources on international stage**

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

18 September 2013 12:52

Alexandra Paul

First Nations leaders are reaching out to leaders of other nations and linking arms with activists here to get the message out that anyone who wants to a piece of Canada's resources must be prepared to do business with them, first.

In a press conference Friday, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs leader Derek Nepinak presented a united front with activists behind a national campaign for a Day of Action next Monday.

And he announced Manitoba's leaders are working with prairie chiefs in talks with OPEC and with Ontario chiefs in similar talks with China, with a view to advancing the land and treaty rights profile of Canada's First Nations on the world stage.

"What we're hoping to get across is to send a message to the members of OPEC, to China and other members of the international community that we did not cede, release or surrender our natural resources to a colonial government... we are waking up from a 100-year slumber and we are going to impose our own laws," Nepinak declared.

Nepinak was among the chiefs on Parliament Hill this week who protested the federal omnibus budget bill on the grounds it attacks aboriginal land rights. That, along with a suite of federal legislation that would alter treaty rights, are behind a grassroots movement spreading through links on Facebook and Twitter. Right now the focus is to roll out rallies in cities across Canada next week in support of aboriginal rights.

Nepinak, flanked by Southern Chiefs leader Murray Clearsky, said across the country there is momentum building among aboriginal people from the kitchen to the podium to assert land and treaty rights in the streets and internationally.

It's born of a sense of frustration over broken treaties in this country that has boiled over now because of federal bills in the House of Commons and the Senate that chip away at aboriginal rights that are supposed to be protected by Canada's constitution, aboriginal activists said.

"I need to make something clear," said Leo Baskatawang, one of half a dozen First Nation social activists who shared the podium Friday. "Treaties are nation-to-nation agreements and I think that's not understood in Canada and it's something that needs to be recognized. There are movement growing across Canada and this is going to be the beginning of further action that takes place."

The rally planned for Winnipeg takes place Monday on the steps of the provincial legislature at noon until 5 p.m.

It isn't the first time Manitoba chiefs have shown a united front against poverty and the social conditions that plague aboriginal people on and off reserve. What's different this time is the momentum appears to be building up from the grassroots and not trickling down from the leaders, a point made earlier this week in a column by University of Winnipeg's director of indigenous inclusion, Wab Kinew.

Manitoba's Grand Chief picked up on that element Friday by paraphrasing a quote from India's Mahatma Gandhi who famously said that when people lead, leaders must follow.

"The chiefs across this country, particularly in Manitoba, have grown tired of dealing with a Conservative government that continues to act like we do not exist," Manitoba's Grand Chief said.

Most of the Facebook and Twitter buzz is generated under the banner "Idle No More."

## **AFN Launches First Nations Food, Nutrition, and Environment Study in Alberta**

[Canada NewsWire](#)

September 18, 2013

OTTAWA, Sept. 18, 2013 /CNW/ - The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) announced today that it is launching a study of nutrition and traditional food and water safety data collection this fall in 11 First Nations communities in Alberta as part of the national *First Nations Food, Nutrition, and Environment Study (FNFNES)*. The FNFNES will document both the nutritional benefits of First Nations diets and food and water as well as the impacts caused by exposure to environmental contaminants.

This study will document some of the challenges that the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food has highlighted as facing First Nations in Canada such as food security, access to traditional foods and affordability of nutritious market foods.

AFN Alberta Regional Chief Cameron Alexis said: "The First Nations Food, Nutrition, and Environment Study will complement ongoing environmental monitoring initiatives and shed light on the concerns First Nations citizens have regarding nutrition and contamination of water and traditional foods. As consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, this study will be led by First Nations collecting their own data to provide a valuable baseline that can support decision-making now and into the future."

The FNFNES aims to gather information from 100 randomly selected First Nations communities across Canada about:

- Use of traditional and store-bought food



- Food security issues
- Traditional foods for nutrient values and contaminant content
- Mercury exposure
- Trace metals in drinking water
- Pharmaceuticals and their metabolites in surface water

"The FNFNES is a positive example of First Nations working directly with the research community to collect and analyze information that affects their lives and their communities," said AFN National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo. "The research is conducted in compliance with the principles of OCAP: Ownership, Control, Access and Possession. These principles should be respected and promoted in any research work with First Nations."

The FNFNES study, launched in 2008, has to date completed data collection in 48 First Nations communities and produced regionally representative reports for British Columbia and Manitoba. Results will soon be communicated back to First Nations in Ontario who participated in the project, with regional results released afterwards. The Assembly of First Nations has partnered with the University of Ottawa and the Université de Montréal in this groundbreaking study.

For more information visit: [www.fnfnesc.ca](http://www.fnfnesc.ca)

The Assembly of First Nations is the national organization representing First Nations citizens in Canada.

SOURCE Assembly of First Nations

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**Key document between Crown and First Nations on display at Museum of Civilization**

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

September 19, 2013 3:01 PM  
Peter Robb



*The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued October 7, 1763 by King George III*

OTTAWA — The central document that defined the relationship between the British Crown, and what would become Canada, and aboriginal peoples will be on display at the Canadian Museum of Civilization until Oct. 27.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued by King George III. It was the first act in which the British Crown recognized the rights of First Nations over a vast territory in Canada. The Proclamation was enshrined in the 1982 Constitution Act. It recognizes Aboriginal title to land and the Crown's legal duty to consult with Aboriginal Peoples on important matters involving their rights, the museum said in a news release.



Along with the Proclamation, the museum will display the Treaty of Peace and Friendship signed by Sir William Johnson and the Huron chiefs of Detroit, one of the first treaties negotiated with First Nations.

"The Royal Proclamation and the Treaty of Peace and Friendship have left their mark on the Canada we know today," says Mark O'Neill, the museum's president who is quoted in the release. "This presentation offers us a unique opportunity to highlight a pivotal period in Canadian history."

The Treaty of Peace and Friendship between the British Crown and the Hurons of Detroit was one of several negotiated in 1764, following the Seven Years' War. These treaties, the museum says, were the model for future negotiations with aboriginal peoples until the beginning of the 20th century.

The display also features a historical map from 1755, modified to illustrate the area of the Province of Quebec in 1763 and the "Indian Territories" established by the Royal Proclamation.

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## **AFN seeking \$400,000 from Ottawa for chiefs' committee on treaties**

[APTN National News](#)

September 18, 2013

Jorge Barrera



The Assembly of First Nations is seeking \$400,000 from Ottawa to fund a chiefs' committee on treaties despite demands from prairie chiefs that the organization relinquish the file.

The AFN, which is the largest First Nations organization in Canada and represents the interests of chiefs, submitted a funding proposal to the federal department of Aboriginal Affairs in July, according to a document obtained by *APTN National News*.

Many First Nations leaders still hold treaties signed with the Crown, both before and after Confederation, as the primary documents that define their relationship with Canada. Canada, however, relies on the Indian Act and so-called modern day treaties signed through the settlement of comprehensive land claim agreements as the primary vehicle for defining Ottawa's relationship with First Nations.

First Nations leaders in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, have been pushing to have treaties again become paramount. They have rejected legislative attempts by Ottawa to address issues like education, arguing the treaties already spell out Canada's responsibilities to First Nations.

The treaty issue has proven divisive within the First Nation political sphere, with prominent chiefs such as Onion Lake Cree Nation Chief Wallace Fox, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak and Serpent River First Nation Chief Isadore Day publicly declaring the AFN has no mandate to handle the treaty file. The AFN's treaty work funding proposal is dated July 10, the same day the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs issued a statement declaring that the AFN had no authorization to do any work on treaty issues.

According to the proposal document, the AFN is seeking the money to support the work of "chiefs task force" in connection with a "senior oversight committee on treaties" created following a Jan. 11 meeting between AFN National Chief Shawn Atleo, selected chiefs and Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

The senior oversight committee includes officials from Aboriginal Affairs, the Prime Minister's Office and the Office of the Privy Council.

According to a budget attached to the proposal, the AFN is seeking \$155,400 for salaries and benefits, \$165,000 for travel and meetings, \$45,223 for consultation and research, \$10,000 for equipment and promotions, \$20,377 for rent and insurance, along with \$4,000 for interpretation and translation.

A spokesperson for the AFN said the organization has still not received a response from Aboriginal Affairs on the proposal.

"The work on treaties by a number of treaty leaders and chiefs continues," said spokesperson Jenna Young, in an emailed statement. "As directed by chiefs, the AFN works to secure resources to support its work across a number of priority areas and initiatives."

The Jan. 11 meeting proved to be a pivotal moment for the AFN and many treaty chiefs who wanted Atleo to skip the meeting because of the limited number of First Nations leaders allowed to attend and the absence of Gov. Gen. David Johnston. In the end, a number of chiefs did attend including Matthew Coon Come, grand chief of the Grand Council of the Crees.

Displeasure by some chiefs over the meeting led to the creation of a new treaty alliance which held its inaugural gathering this summer in Onion Lake with about 85 chiefs in attendance. The alliance is expected to meet again on Oct. 6 and it has plans to call for a meeting with Harper.

Fox declined to be interviewed on the AFN's funding proposal.

The AMC also declined to issue a comment, but a spokesperson said the statement issued July 10 still stands.

"First Nations have not delegated their sovereignty with respect to dealing with treaties to the (AFN)...our leadership was very clear that the AFN does not have the authority to bind the treaty First Nations of Manitoba or to carry out any activity....Treaties are also are also fundamental to the legitimacy of the Canadian constitution and cannot be negotiated away behind closed doors at high level tables in Ottawa," said Nepinak in the statement.

The federal government wants its discussions on treaties at the senior oversight committee to remain confidential, according to a copy of the terms of reference obtained by *APTN National News*.

A spokesperson for Aboriginal Affairs said the department was working on a request for comment on the AFN's proposal.

No statement was available as of this article's initial posting.

The AFN was hit by a \$1.7 million cut earlier this year as the department changed the way it funded First Nations organizations.

## **Q&A: First Nations chief turns residential school past into bestseller: Bev Sellars speaks to The Sun about her book, They Call me Number One**

[Vancouver Sun](#)

September 19, 2013 1:00 PM

Brian Morton



*Author Bev Sellars and her Mom, Evelyn Sellars, September 18th, in their Vancouver home. Sellars has written a bestselling book on her families experiences in residential schools in Williams Lake. Photograph by: Ward Perrin, Vancouver Sun*

Soda Creek Indian Band Chief Bev Sellars is a member of the Xat'sull, the northernmost Shuswap tribe of the Secwepemc Nation.

The 58-year-old lived at St. Joseph's residential school in Williams Lake from 1962 to 1967 and has written about her experiences in a memoir, *They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School*.

The book is in its 20th week on the B.C. Bestsellers list, currently at No. 2.

Q: Your book has had tremendous success. What's it like to be on the bestsellers list?

A: Well, I'm a little surprised. I was hoping my family would read it and a few redneck people around Williams Lake. I didn't think it would be this widely accepted.

Q: How long did it take you to write this book and how difficult was the writing process?

A: The writing was really difficult, but it was really therapeutic for me as well. I started writing in the early '90s, with the intention of it being for my family. But it ended up becoming a book. I cried enough tears to fill a swimming pool. It helped me to connect the dots from how my childhood affected my adult life and it helped me think about the destructive behaviour I needed to change. I didn't sit down and write the book. It was a whole bunch of notes I collected over the years. Then, my husband encouraged me to turn it into a book. It was over a period of 20 years and I finished it with the final editing this year.

Q: What is your main message in the book?

A: My main message is just that I want First Nations people to understand how they got to the place they did. It's the same message for non-aboriginal people. People are too quick to condemn aboriginal people without understanding where they've been.

Q: In your book you say that hugging was alien to you and your family. Please elaborate on why hugging, or any human touch, was associated with suffering and pain.

A: Because when we were at the mission, any touching was harmful. We'd get the strap, we'd be punished. We wouldn't hug there. We weren't allowed to cry. We were expected to be emotionless. It just became that touching was something that you didn't do. It was foreign to us.

Q: How does hugging today 'de-program' the effects of the residential school?

A: I think hugging is a regular part of normal family experience, something that aboriginal people have to get over and realize. There's good ways to touch. It's not a big deal for me anymore. My daughter went to Portugal and they hug over there all the time. So she started hugging me, but I'm sure I froze when she first did it.

Q: You have said that you were not allowed to grow up a Secwepemc person with pride and confidence in your potential. How did that impact your life?

A: It impacted my life because of instead of allowing me to be a Secwepemc child with a culture and language of my own, I was being programmed to be a poor copy of a culture that had its origins across the ocean. We were taught our culture was bad. You grow up thinking that who you are is bad, so that affects your psyche. If you don't feel good about yourself, you won't fulfil your potential. It has a devastating effect on you.

Q: What about today? Are you hopeful for the future of aboriginal peoples?

A: Oh yes, I look around now and there's a lot of First Nations people who are dealing with this and starting to understand what happened to them and trying to get over everything.

Q: What are your plans for the future? Do you plan to continue writing?

A: Talon Books is after me to do another book, and we have to see about that. I thought I had only one book in me, but I think I have more to say so I think there's another book there.

My term for chief still has another two years. I'm concentrating on that.

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## **Canada criticized for rejecting UN call to review violence against Aboriginal women**

[CTV News](#)

September 19, 2013 6:11AM EDT

Mike Blanchfield



*Participants of the Women's Worlds 2011 Congress take part in a rally on Parliament Hill in solidarity with missing and murdered aboriginal women in Ottawa on Tuesday, July 5, 2011. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Sean Kilpatrick*

OTTAWA -- Cuba, Iran, Belarus and Russia used a United Nations body Thursday to

criticize Canada's human-rights record, as the Canadian envoy rejected calls to develop a comprehensive national review to end violence against aboriginal women. Canada was responding Thursday to the UN Human Rights Council, which is conducting its Universal Period Review of Canada's rights record, on a wide range of issues from poverty, immigration, prostitution and the criminal justice system. Countries have their rights records reviewed every four years by the Geneva-based UN forum, but the Harper government has been skeptical in part because it allows countries with dubious rights records to criticize Canada.

Canada's ambassador to the UN in Geneva, Elissa Golberg, offered a brief rebuttal to Belarus, but did not engage directly with the other countries that criticized Canada. "Canada is proud of its human-rights record, and our peaceful and diverse society," Golberg told the one-hour session.

While no society is entirely free of discrimination, she noted, Canada has "a strong legal and policy framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, and an independent court system."

Recommendations from those countries were among the 40 of 162 that Canada chose to reject.

That also included a rejection of a series of resolutions calling on Canada to undertake sweeping national reviews of violence against aboriginal women. Golberg said Canada takes the issue seriously and that provincial and local governments are better suited to getting results on those issues.

Shawn Atleo, national chief of Canada's Assembly of First Nations, said there is deep concern among aboriginals over the government's refusal to conduct a national review of the problem.

"There is strong support for this action domestically among provincial and territorial leaders and the Canadian public and strong international support, not to mention a multitude of reports and investigations that urge Canada to act," Atleo said in a statement.

He said talk is not enough.

"It is especially clear that words need to be supported by actions, that commitments and declarations need to be accompanied by concrete and concerted efforts in collaboration with First Nations to ensure all of our citizens, including women and girls, are safe."

The countries that called for a national review included Switzerland, Norway, Slovenia, Slovakia and New Zealand.

Other countries with poor rights records, including Iran, Cuba and Belarus, also supported the call for an investigation into the disappearances, murder and sexual abuse of aboriginal women in Canada.

In a response to be formally tabled Thursday in Geneva, Canada says it is "strongly committed to taking action with aboriginal and non-aboriginal groups to prevent and stop violence against aboriginal women" through a series of federal and provincial initiatives.

"There have been a number of inquiries and resulting proposals for improvements over the years," says the reply.

"In addition, race-based statistics are not recorded in a systematic manner across Canada's criminal justice system due to operational, methodological, legal and privacy concerns."

Canada faced similar calls to better address the concerns of its aboriginal population in 2009, when it faced its last review by the UN body.

"Such comments were made by a range of states, some of them close allies, some not. For example, the United Kingdom, Norway and the Netherlands, as well as Cuba and Iran, recommended that Canada better address Aboriginal Peoples' concerns," said an April 2013 Library of Parliament review of the UN review process. The issue reared its head again in February when the New York-based group Human Rights Watch issued a highly critical report alleging police abuse of aboriginal women in British Columbia.

It too urged the Harper government to strike a national commission of inquiry along with the B.C. provincial government, a measure that was endorsed by the NDP, Liberals, the Green party and the Assembly of First Nations.

James Anaya, the UN special rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, is scheduled to visit Canada in October to conduct his own inquiry.

The federal government will get a chance to respond to Anaya's findings before a final report is circulated and presented to the UN rights council.

The Harper government has butted heads in the past with previous UN special rapporteurs.

Conservative cabinet ministers have blasted the UN's right-to-food envoy Olivier De Schutter for saying too many Canadian citizens are going hungry.



It is all part of a periodic war of words between the Harper government and various UN bodies. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has criticized a Quebec law on demonstrations, prompting a quick response from Ottawa.

The UN Committee Against Torture has also accused Ottawa of being "complicit" in human rights violations committed against three Arab-Canadian men held in Syria after 9-11.

## **Powwow Signals University Is Headed for Bright Future**

[Indian Country Today](#)

September 16, 2013



*Photo Credit: Aaron Stuckel/cmje.com Dancers celebrate at FNUC's 10th anniversary on the university's Regina Campus*

The First Nations University of Canada celebrated 10 years of growth by holding a traditional powwow to mark the number of years since the university changed its name from Saskatchewan Indian Federated College.



The celebrations began at Noon on Thursday, and all students gathered to watch dancers, singers, and drummers from across the province perform throughout the afternoon. University dignitaries, students and FSIN Chief Perry Bellegarde spoke to the crowd in between performances.

But just a few years ago, the celebration might not have been possible. According to [cjme.com](http://cjme.com), problems with the university's administration and allegations of financial mismanagement caused the school to lose its accreditation in 2007. And in 2010, the federal government pulled its funding to the school putting the 37 year-old institution's future in question.

Despite it all, the school has fought through those issues and thrived this year with an enrollment boost in its community-based programs. Since 2010, the university has grown 30 percent with 755 students currently enrolled, according to [globalnews.ca](http://globalnews.ca).

"Our student numbers are very high and we're very excited about growing more," said vice President of Academics Lynn Wells who told Aaron Stuckel of [cjme.com](http://cjme.com) that they just completed a strategic plan to hire new faculty and researchers as well as a new executive team.

The powwow welcomed back all of FCUN's students to class and to the opening of its iconic Regina Campus Building in Regina, Canada. Many students choose to attend the university to learn more about their ancestral heritage. Particularly students like Amanda Worm, who grew up in a city with Western traditions. "I didn't have the privilege of growing up First Nations or knowing my traditions, so I knew this place was the place for me," she told [cjme.com](http://cjme.com).

"This university is going to put out—it already has put out—hundreds of (Indigenous) graduates," said student body president Jaqueline Anaquod, to News Talk 980. "So, it's future is very bright."